



Lindsay Springer



Jill Beard with Yessica



Chris Holloway with Chito (right) and friend

MISSION TO GUATEMALA

DBU Students Partner with Buckner, Minister to Orphans in Central America

Twenty-five students from Dallas Baptist University spent the first part of their summer break on a 12-day trip ministering to orphans in Guatemala. The students have become part of a growing ministry partnership that DBU has developed with Buckner International, a Christian social service organization based in Dallas.

DBU's first trip to Guatemala in 2003 took students to Xela, Guatemala, a town located approximately seven hours outside of Guatemala City. This summer, the students returned to Xela, teaching Bible lessons, repairing and cleaning buildings, and above all else, sharing the love of Christ with the orphaned children.

"When we first walked in, we were immediately met with huge smiles and kids wanting to be scooped up, held, twirled, and put on our shoulders," explained DBU senior Jill Beard.

Both Beard and DBU senior Preston Hagaman journeyed to Peru last summer to participate in a previous DBU-Buckner mission trip. According to Hagaman, "I chose to go to Guatemala because I went on the trip to Peru last year and really developed a special place in my heart for orphan children."

"When we came back home this year, I left again with a very heavy heart and a renewed feeling of responsibility," said Hagaman. "As Americans, we have been greatly blessed, but we have not been blessed simply to become increasingly selfish. Rather, we are to share the great blessings bestowed upon us with those who are less fortunate and in great need."

Echoing these sentiments, DBU doctoral student

Justin Gandy stated, "Jesus encouraged us all to go to the ends of the earth to share God's love. I have had the opportunity to travel to other countries and minister in orphanages before, and while everyone is not necessarily called to a life of full-time mission work, we are richly blessed in this country, and to whom much is given, much is required."

Unlike Beard, Hagaman, and Gandy, junior Chris Hendricks had not gone on a foreign mission trip before. "I had never traveled out of the country and had only once before been on a plane, but I wanted to go to Guatemala because I knew that it would be a special trip," said Hendricks. "I did not know what to expect, but I knew that God would teach me something, somehow, and in some way."

Working with the children taught the DBU students lasting lessons as they gave their all to pour out love and attention on the children. "Children are children no matter what language they speak or what country they live in," observed Gandy. "We all have a need for attention and love, and these children craved those things like anyone their age."

"Being able to spend eight days in one orphanage gave us the opportunity to form a deeper bond," explained Hagaman. "I grew very attached to a two-year-old boy named Jason. He was a great kid, and some of the best times that we shared were us just sitting outside together or playing catch."

Hendricks also formed bonds with the children, especially one two-year-old boy whose shoes showed signs of wear and tear. "I'll never forget Chito and his



Preston Hagaman



Jessica Turner



Masey Cockins

'broken shoes,'" said Hendricks. "He wore a pair with a sole that had come undone from the shoe. Every time he would kick a soccer ball, the sole would drag on the ground, and it got worse and worse every day."

To help Chito, Hendricks and fellow DBU student Chris Holloway pooled their money together to buy Chito a new pair of shoes. "We got the shoes on the last day that we were there, and it was good timing, because when we went to give them to Chito, we noticed that he was completely barefoot. His old shoes finally went to the trash."

"I remember one of the days, Chito fell asleep in my arms for a couple of hours," continued Hendricks. "During his nap, I prayed for him, asking God to grant him peace and comfort and the knowledge that he is deeply loved by his Heavenly Father, even though his earthly parents abandoned him. I know that I will probably never see him again in this life, but I pray that I will have a chance in the next."

Jill Beard also grew attached to a special little child, a girl with disabilities named Yessica. "When I walked up to the girls' room, I noticed something lying on the bed," Beard explained. "As I got closer, this little girl popped up with a huge grin on her face. She had such compassion, and although she could not walk or hold herself up or speak very clearly, she sang with all of her might and showed love to those around her. My

favorite memories were when we would just sit and sing together."

"Every trip that our students make with Buckner to orphanages around the world, something special happens," commented Jay Harley, DBU dean of spiritual life and sponsor for the trip. "Our students have the chance to put their faith to action. It is exciting to see them share the love of Christ with kids who may not receive much love on a regular basis. God uses all of these trips to teach students about His work around the world and about His calling to serve others with our lives."



Jonathan Galvan